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ABSTRACT

During the 1989-90 academic year, the Washington community colleges enrolled nearly 15,000 individuals receiving public assistance under the Family Independence Program (FIP) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), representing about 5% of the total student population. A joint project was conducted by the staff of the State Board for Community College Education and the FIP to estimate future enrollments of FIP students and those being served under a new federal welfare program called Jobs, Opportunities, and Basic Skills Program (JOBS), and to describe service levels, differences between FIP and AFDC students, and participation of public assistance students by college. An examination of fall 1989 and spring 1990 student data revealed that, when compared to other community college students, public assistance students were more racially and ethnically diverse, twice as likely to be preparing for a job, half as likely to be preparing for transfer, more likely to require financial aid, and more tightly grouped in age around the median age for all students of 28 years. In comparison to AFDC students, FIP students enrolled for more credits, were more likely to attend full-time, had a higher retention rate from quarter to quarter, were more racially and ethnically diverse, and were more likely to have enrolled in basic skills or developmental studies courses. Graphs and data tables are included. (GFW)

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ED326274

Operations Report
No 90-4

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Family Independence Program (FIP)

And

Aid To Families

With Dependent Children (AFDC)

December 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

Nearly 15,000 individuals receiving public assistance under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the Family Independence Program (FIP) were enrolled in Washington community colleges during academic year 1989-90. About five percent of the total student population is receiving public assistance from AFDC or FIP each quarter.

During the past year, the staff of the State Board for Community College Education (SBCCE), in cooperation with the Family Independence program staff, has been reviewing the enrollment patterns of public assistance students. The SBCCE analyzed the enrollment impact of FIP. That analysis was used to project the future enrollments both of FIP students and the new federal welfare reform program called Jobs, Opportunities, and Basic Skills Program (JOBS). FIP staff also asked SBCCE to provide information on the characteristics of FIP and AFDC students at community colleges. This report presents highlights of that analysis.

The report is based primarily on spring 1990 data from the SBCCE Student Management Information System (SMIS) matched with data on public assistance participants in May, 1990. The enrollment pattern for spring 1990 was similar to that of the other 1989-90 academic quarters. Financial aid data are available only for fall quarter. Related data in the report are also for fall 1989.

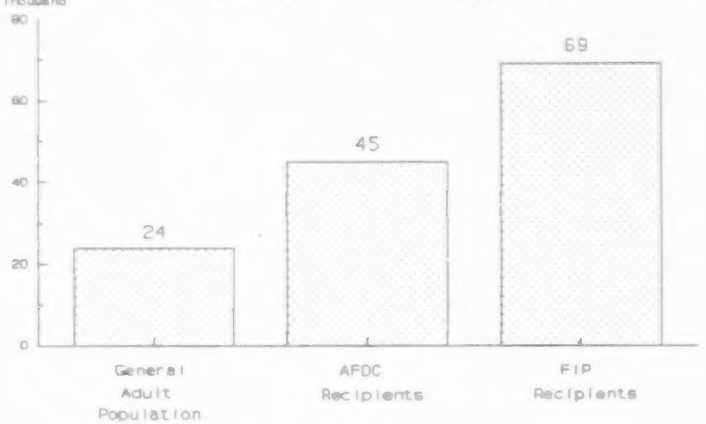
The report describes service levels, characteristic of public assistance students versus other students, differences between FIP and AFDC students, and participation of public assistance students by college.

HIGH SERVICE LEVELS FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Public assistance participants have historically enrolled in community colleges in higher proportion than the general population. The graph compares service levels of FIP and AFDC recipients with those of the general population.

SBCCE attributes the high service level of the public assistance population, in part, to the opportunities community colleges afford to overcome a lack of formal education through the Adult Basic Education, English-as-a-Second-Language and the General Educational Development (GED) testing program. About 41 percent of the public assistance population has not completed high school and lacks the formal education and skills necessary for gaining a well-paying job.

GRAPH 1
1989-90 COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SERVICE LEVEL (FTEs PER THOUSAND)



The Family Independence Program (FIP) encourages training for welfare recipients who can benefit from education and training. The program reduces some of the financial barriers to college attendance such as child-care and medical assistance. Consequently an even higher proportion of FIP recipients attend community colleges than do AFDC recipients. Consequently, FIP has placed greater enrollment demands on the community colleges.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STUDENTS VERSUS OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Data show five areas of difference between public assistance participants and other students enrolled in community colleges:

* **Public Assistance Enrollments Increase During Year:** It is typical for community college enrollments to decline from fall to winter and from winter to spring quarters. The pattern was the reverse for FIP participants (both FTEs and individual students) during 1989-90. The FIP program attracted more participants each succeeding quarter, as shown in Table I. Greater FTE enrollment among AFDC participants in spring also varied from the traditional pattern.

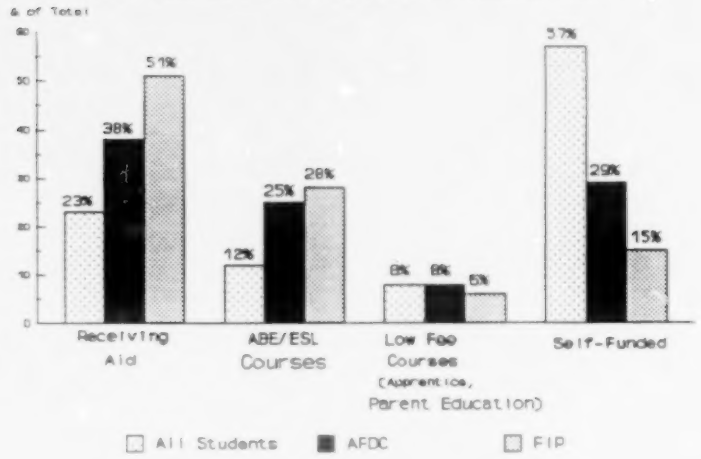
TABLE I
FALL TO SPRING FIP AND AFDC CHANGES

	FIP	AFDC	TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
1989-90 Headcount			
Fall	3,617	4,838	8,455
Winter	4,085	4,854	8,939
Spring	4,171	4,737	8,908
Growth Fall to Spring	15.3%	-2.1%	5.4%
1989-90 FTEs			
Fall	2,795	3,387	6,182
Winter	3,167	3,349	6,516
Spring	3,438	3,453	6,891
Growth Fall to Spring	23.0%	1.9%	11.5%

* **Greater Diversity**: There was more racial and ethnic diversity among public assistance students (21 percent students of color) than the community college enrollment in general (17 percent students of color). The ratio of women to men was much higher among the public assistance enrollment (85 percent female) than for the general community college enrollment (57 percent female). The public assistance population attending community colleges had more than twice as many students with limited English skills (27 percent) as did the community college population in general (12 percent).

* **Program Goals**: The public assistance student was twice as likely to be preparing for a job than the typical community college student (27 percent versus 15 percent) and almost half as likely as the typical student to be preparing for transfer (16 percent versus 25 percent).

GRAPH II
FALL 1989 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID



* **Financial Aid**: The public assistance students were more likely than the general students to require financial aid or to enroll in free tuition courses such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) as shown in the graph.

* **Age:** While the median age of the public assistance student was 28, the same as that of the student population in general, nearly half the public assistance students were ages 25 to 34 (49 percent) compared to only 29 percent among students in general. The general student population had more older and more younger students than the public assistance group.

The number of disabled students among the public assistance population was similar to that of the community college population as a whole (4 percent).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFDC AND FIP STUDENTS

Community college data show four major differences between AFDC and FIP recipients enrolled at community colleges:

* **More Credits For FIP:** FIP students enrolled for more credits (12.4) than did AFDC students (10.9). There were also more full-time students among the FIP students as shown in Table II.

TABLE II
SPRING 1990 ENROLLMENT
FIP AND AFDC STUDENTS

	FIP	AFDC	TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Total Enrollments	4,171	4,737	8,908
Participation Rate	12.5%	9.4%	10.7%
Total FTEs	3,438	3,453	6,891
Average Credits	12.4	10.9	11.6
Full-time (10 credits or more)	76%	63%	69%
Average Credits	14.9	14.6	14.8
Part-time			
(Less than 10 credits)	24%	37%	31%
Average Credits	4.3	4.6	4.5

* **Higher Retention for FIP:** FIP students continued from quarter to quarter at a higher rate than did AFDC students or students in general. Fifty-one percent of the fall 1989 FIP group continued their enrollment to spring 1990 compared to 45 percent of the AFDC group. (Forty-three percent of all new state-supported students in fall 1989 continued to spring 1990.) See Table III.

TABLE III
FALL TO SPRING AND WINTER TO SPRING
FIP AND AFDC RETENTION

	FIP	AFDC	TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Attended Fall	3,617	4,838	8,455
Continued All 3 Quarters	1,841	2,198	4,039
3 Quarter Retention Rate	50.9%	45.4%	47.8%
Attended Winter	4,085	4,854	8,939
Winter-Spring Retention	3,266	3,820	7,088
2 Quarter Retention Rate	80.0%	78.7%	79.3%

* **FIP More Diverse:** The FIP participant group enrolled in community colleges was more racially and ethnically diverse than the AFDC enrollment as shown in Table IV. Also, a slightly greater proportion of men from the FIP group enroll than do men from the AFDC group. That difference is due to the participation of more two-parent families in FIP than in AFDC.

TABLE IV
CHARACTERISTICS OF FIP AND AFDC STUDENTS
SPRING 1990

	FIP STUDENTS		AFDC STUDENTS		TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	
CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING
SEX						
Female	3,389	82%	3,933	84%	4,118	85%
Male	729	18%	723	16%	729	15%
RACE/ETHNIC						
White	2,983	76%	3,544	81%	6,527	79%
Asian/Pacific Islander	305	8%	353	8%	658	8%
African American	238	6%	195	4%	433	5%
Hispanic	196	5%	158	4%	354	4%
Native American	189	5%	151	3%	340	4%
LIMITED ENGLISH	1,157	28%	1,286	27%	2,443	27%
WHEN STARTED COLLEGE						
Fall 89	732	18%	706	15%	1,438	16%
Winter 90	462	11%	452	10%	914	10%
Spring 90	704	17%	782	17%	1,486	17%
1988-89	771	18%	813	17%	1,584	18%
1987-88	382	9%	479	10%	861	10%
1980-1987	761	18%	996	21%	1,757	20%
Before 1980	359	9%	509	11%	868	10%

- **More Basic Skills and Developmental Education for FIP:** The FIP participants were somewhat more likely than AFDC participants to be enrolled in basic skills during spring quarter (see "Course Areas Enrolled: Basic Skills Only" in Table V) or to have enrolled in basic skills or developmental studies courses than AFDC participants. Basic skills courses include English-as-a- Second-Language classes (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE - below ninth grade level) and preparation courses for the General Education Development (GED) test. Typically, those enrolled for "Basic Skills Only" are enrolled in either ABE, GED or ESL courses.

  Developmental studies courses offer remedial training below the college level primarily in writing, reading and math. FIP and AFDC students combined accounted for eight percent of all basic skills students and six percent of all developmental studies students.

TABLE V
COURSES TAKEN BY FIP AND AFDC STUDENTS
SPRING 1990

	FIP STUDENTS		AFDC STUDENTS		TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	
COURSE AREAS ENROLLED	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL REPORTING
BASIC SKILLS ONLY	1,145	27%	1,168	25%	2,313	26%
VOCATIONAL						
Vocational Only	913	22%	1,235	26%	2,148	24%
Vocational and Developmental	204	5%	317	7%	521	6%
VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC	962	23%	1,128	24%	2,090	23%
ACADEMIC						
Academic Only	498	12%	531	11%	1,029	12%
Academic and Developmental	329	8%	273	6%	602	7%
AVOCATIONAL	83	2%	67	1%	150	2%
TOOK BASIC SKILLS OR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES AT SOME TIME	1,908	46%	1,996	42%	3,904	44%

The difference in the pattern of basic skills enrollment for FIP and AFDC participants may be due to several factors. FIP participants with poorer academic skills may receive more encouragement than AFDC students to upgrade those skills at community colleges. FIP participants may have poorer academic skills than AFDC participants. FIP students may be more likely than AFDC students to have their levels of skill tested and to be referred to basic skills courses.

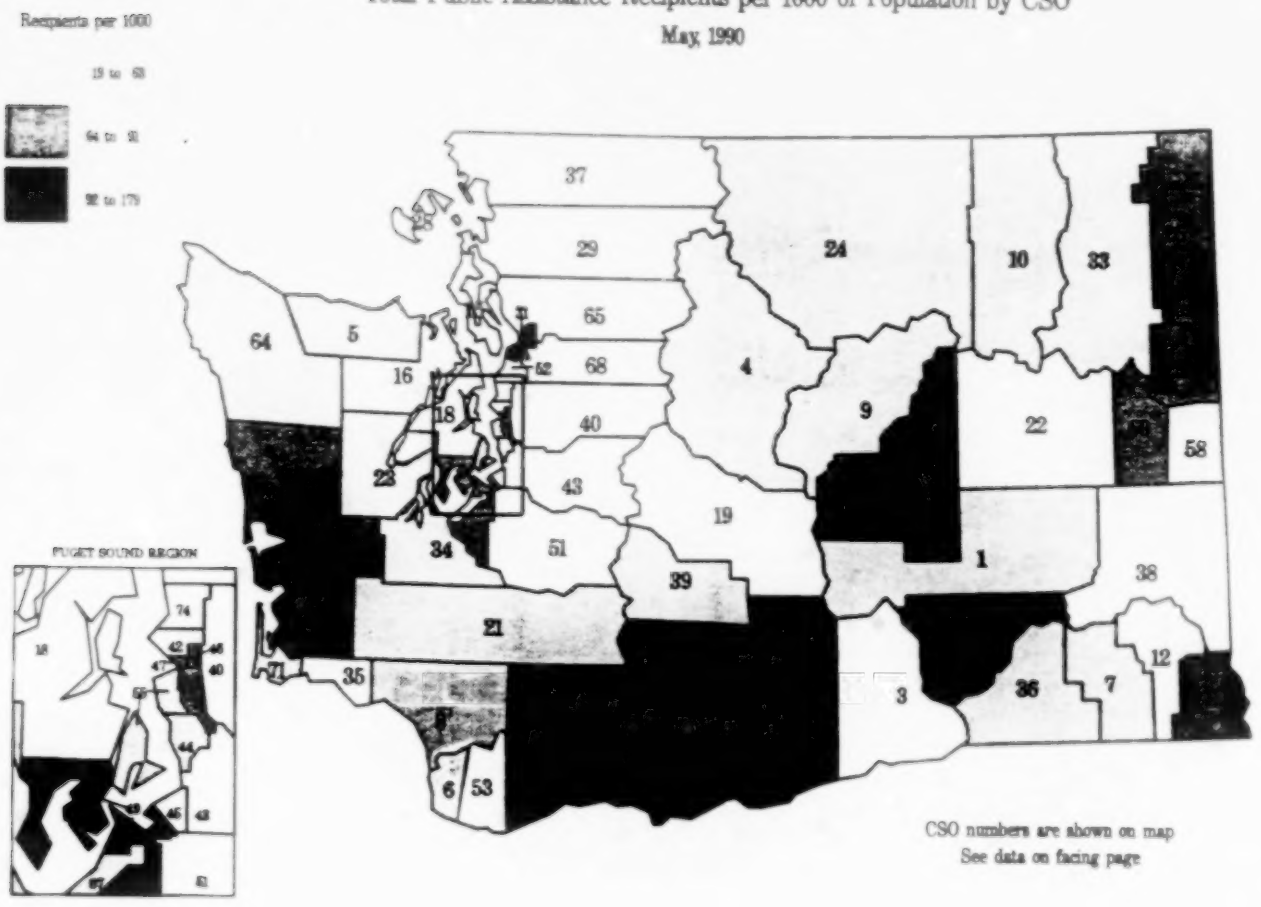
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PARTICIPATION BY COLLEGE

Enrollment of public assistance recipients at individual community colleges (see Table VI) varied in a manner consistent with participation in public assistance programs by the general population. Illustration I prepared by the Data Analysis Section, Office of Research and Data Analysis, Washington Department of Social and Health Services, shows the variation in public assistance participation by county for May, 1990.

Illustration 1

Total Public Assistance Recipients per 1000 of Population by CSO

May, 1990



CSO numbers are shown on map
See data on facing page

TABLE VI
FIP AND AFDC ENROLLMENTS BY COLLEGE
SPRING 1990

DISTRICT/COLLEGE	FIP	AFDC	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL IN FIP	WELFARE STUDENTS AS % OF ALL STUDENTS
010 PENINSULA	152	35	187	81%	7%
020 GRAYS HARBOR	1	241	242	>1%	10%
030 OLYMPIC	3	275	278	1%	5%
040 SKAGIT VALLEY	4	255	259	2%	5%
050 EVERETT	465	29	494	94%	8%
062 SEATTLE CENTRAL	183	256	439	42%	5%
063 NORTH SEATTLE	46	120	166	28%	2%
064 SOUTH SEATTLE	299	78	377	79%	7%
070 SHORELINE	19	70	89	21%	1%
080 BELLEVUE	177	15	192	92%	2%
090 HIGHLINE	205	115	320	64%	4%
100 GREEN RIVER	44	122	166	27%	3%
110 PIERCE	91	114	205	44%	2%
121 CENTRALIA	3	250	253	1%	7%
130 LOWER COLUMBIA		305	305	0%	8%
140 CLARK	63	416	479	13%	6%
150 WENATCHEE VALLEY	4	205	209	2%	7%
160 YAKIMA VALLEY	225	294	519	43%	12%
171 SPOKANE	772	58	830	93%	14%
172 SPOKANE FALLS	807	113	920	88%	7%
180 BIG BEND	206	10	216	95%	12%
190 COLUMBIA BASIN	15	263	278	5%	5%
200 WALLA WALLA	1	345	346	>1%	8%
210 WHATCOM		144	144	0%	5%
220 TACOMA	235	175	410	57%	7%
230 EDMONDS	149	178	327	46%	5%
240 SO. PUGET SOUND	2	256	258	1%	7%
SYSTEM TOTALS	4,171	4,737	8,908	47%	6%

CONCLUSIONS

Washington community colleges have a high level of service to AFDC and FIP students.

Given the needs of FIP and AFDC students, it is likely that they place significant demands on colleges' services such as testing offices, child care centers, minority student services and advising. Due to differences in these two programs, the FIP students tend to enroll for more courses and stay at the community college longer than do AFDC students. Thus, while both groups had significant impact on community college enrollments, FIP students had a greater impact.

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